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The

Clandestine Marriage

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THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE;

A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.—BY G. COLMAN AND D. GARRICK.



Act II.—Scene I.

CHARACTERS.

LORD OGLEBY
SIR JOHN MELVIL
STERLING
LOVEWELL

SERGEANT FLOWER
TRAVERSE
TRUEMAN
CANTON

BRUSH
SERVANTS
MRS. HEIDELBERG
MISS STERLING

FANNY
BETTY
CHAMBERMAID
TRUSTY

ACT I.—SCENE I.—A Room in Sterling's house.

Enter MISS FANNY, and BETTY meeting.

Bet. (Running in.) Ma'am! Miss Fanny!

Fan. What's the matter, Betty? [ma'am!

Bet. Oh la! Ma'am! as sure as I am alive, here is your husband: I saw him crossing the court-yard in his boots.

Fan. I am glad to hear it. But pray now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again on any account. You know we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of an accident.

Bet. Dear, ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth than I am: though I say it, I am as secret as the grave; and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doomsday for Betty.

Fan. I know you are faithful; but in our circumstances we cannot be too careful.

Bet. Very true, ma'am; and yet I vow and protest there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body mayn't mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

Fan. Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then I hope you may mention it to anybody. Mr. Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

Bet. The sooner the better, I believe; for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale, I know of, will come and tell it for him.

Fan. Fie, Betty!

Bet. Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms—

[you.

Fan. Have done! I shall be quite angry with

Bet. Angry! Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it as much as if it was my own. I meant no harm, heaven knows.

Fan. Well, say no more of this; it makes me uneasy.—All I have to ask of you is, to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter till we disclose it to the family ourselves.

Bet. Me reveal it! If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world; and as for Mr. Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother. But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evening. For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as—

Fan. See there now again! Pray be careful.

Bet. Well, well; nobody hears me. Man and wife—I'll say no more.—What I tell you is very true, for all that.

Love. (Within.) William!

Bet. Hark! I hear your husband—

Fan. What!

Bet. I say here comes Mr. Lovewell. Mind the caution I gave you: I'll be whipped now if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family. However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me: as you sow, so you must reap; as you brew, so you must bake. I'll e'en slip down the back stairs, and leave you together. [Exit.

Fan. I see, I see, I shall never have a moment's ease till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health, and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. My love! How's this? In tears? Indeed this is too much. You promised me to support your spirits, and to wait the determination of our fortune with patience. For my sake, for your own, be comforted. Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

Fan. Oh, Mr. Lovewell! the indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a

guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family, and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

Love. Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. The amiable delicacy of your temper, and your quick sensibility, only serve to make you unhappy. To clear up this affair properly to Mr. Sterling, is the continual employment of my thoughts. Everything now is in a fair train. It begins to grow ripe for a discovery; and I have no doubt of it's concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

Fan. End how it will, I am resolv'd it shall end soon—very soon. I would not live another week in this agony of mind to be mistress of the universe.

Love. Do not be too violent neither. Do not let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion. I have brought letters from Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil to Mr. Sterling. They will be here this evening; and, I dare say, within this hour.

Fan. I am sorry for it.

Love. Why so?

Fan. No matter: only let us disclose our marriage

Love. As soon as possible. [immediately.]

Fan. But directly.

Love. In a few days you may depend on it.

Fan. To-night; or to-morrow morning.

Love. That, I fear, will be impracticable.

Fan. Nay, but you must.

Love. Must! Why? [ing reasons for it.]

Fan. Indeed you must: I have the most alarm-

Love. Alarming, indeed! for they alarm me, even before I am acquainted with them. What are they?

Fan. I cannot tell you.

Love. Not tell me?

Fan. Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with everything.

Love. Sorry they are coming! Must be discovered! what can this mean? Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

Fan. Do not disturb yourself with conjectures; but rest assur'd, that though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be it what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

Love. You put me upon the rack: I would do anything to make you easy; but you know your father's temper. Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence, can ever make him forego; and these he thinks his money will purchase. You know, too, your aunt's, Mrs. Heidelberg's, notions of the splendour of high life; her contempt for everything that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that from the vast fortune in her hands, left her by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr. Sterling and the whole family. Now if they should come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly, they might perhaps be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

Fan. Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

Love. But in the meantime make yourself easy.

Fan. As easy as I can, I will. We had better not remain together any longer at present.

Enter STERLING.

Ster. Hey-day! who have we got here?

Fan. (*Confused.*) Mr. Lovewell, sir.

Ster. And where are you going, hussy?

Fan. To my sister's chamber, sir. [*Exit.*]

Ster. Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl yonder into a corner? Well, well, let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to Sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

Love. Would to heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation.

Ster. Yourself, eh, Lovewell?

Love. With your pleasure, sir.

Ster. Mighty well!

Love. And I flatter myself, that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

Ster. Better and better!

Love. And if I could but obtain your consent, sir—

Ster. What! You marry Fanny? no, no; that will never do, Lovewell. You're a good boy, to be sure; I have a great value for you; but can't think of you for a son-in-law. There's no stuff in the case; no money, Lovewell.

Love. My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but though not equal to splendour, sufficient to keep us above distress,—add to which, that I hope by diligence to increase it, and have love, honour—

Ster. But not the stuff, Lovewell. Add one little round 0 to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me. You know I've a regard for you—would do anything to serve you—anything on the footing of friendship; but—

Love. If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be assured that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly.

Ster. Psha! psha! that's another thing, you know. Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

Love. But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations.

Ster. Inclinations! why you would persuade me that the girl is in love with you, eh, Lovewell?

Love. I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir; but am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

Ster. Why, indeed, now, if your kinsman, Lord Ogleby, would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible—No, no—'twill never do. I must hear no more of this. Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

Love. (*Hesitating.*) I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you, if I did promise.

Ster. Why, you would not offer to marry her without my consent! would you, Lovewell?

Love. Marry her, sir! (*Confused.*)

Ster. Ay, marry her, sir! I know very well, that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young spark as you are, would go much further towards persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers, or mothers, or uncles, or aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner. I must insist on it, that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

Love. Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir,—Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

Ster. Promise, then, that you will carry this matter no further without my approbation.

Love. You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no further.

Ster. Well, well, that's enough. I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you. Come, come, let's have done with this nonsense! What's doing in town? Any news upon 'Change?

Love. Nothing material.

Ster. Have you seen the currants, the soap, and Madeira, safe in the warehouse? Have you compared the goods with the invoice, and bills of lading, and are they all right?

Love. They are, sir.

Ster. And how are stocks?

Love. Fell one and a half this morning.

Ster. Well, well; some good news from America, and they'll be up again. But how are Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

Love. Very soon, sir. I came on purpose to

bring you their commands. Here are letters from both of them. (*Giving letters.*)

Ster. Let me see; let me see. 'Slife! how his lordship's letter is perfumed! It takes my breath away. (*Opening it.*) And French paper too!—with a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes. *My dear Mr. Sterling—*(*Reading.*)—Mercy on me! his lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercise.—But how's this? Eh! *With you to-night—Lawyers to-morrow morning.*—To-night! That's sudden indeed. Where's my sister Heidelberg? She should know of this immediately. Here, John! Harry! Thomas! (*Calling the Servants.*) Harkye, Lovewell!

Love. Sir.

Ster. Mind, now, how I'll entertain his lordship and Sir John. We'll show your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city. They shall eat gold, and drink gold, and lie in gold. Here, cook! butler! (*Calling.*) What signifies your birth, and education, and title? Money, money! that's the stuff that makes the great man

Love. Very true, sir. [in this country.

Ster. True, sir! Why then have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business. Where are these fellows? John! Thomas! (*Calling.*) Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course.—Ah! Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe. 'Slife! man, a rich English merchant may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob. Where are all my rascals? Here, William! [*Exit calling.*

Love. So; as I suspected: quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure. What's best to be done? Let me see. Suppose I get Sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to Lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it. I can open my mind also more freely to Sir John. He told me, when I left him in town, that he had something of consequence to communicate, and that I could be of use to him. I am glad of it: for the confidence he reposes in me, and the service I may do him, will ensure me his good offices. Poor Fanny! it hurts me to see her so uneasy, and her making a mystery of the cause adds to my anxiety. Something must be done upon her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Miss Sterling's Dressing-room.*

MISS STERLING and FANNY discovered.

Miss S. O, my dear sister, say no more. This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure. Well, after all, it is extremely natural. It is impossible to be angry with you.

Fan. Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

Miss S. And you really pretend not to envy me?

Fan. Not in the least.

Miss S. And you don't in the least wish that you was just in my situation?

Fan. No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

Miss S. Why should you? What! on the brink of marriage, fortune, title! But I had forgot: there's that dear sweet creature, Mr. Lovewell, in the case. You would not break your faith with your true-love now for the world, I warrant you.

Fan. Mr. Lovewell! always Mr. Lovewell! Lord! what signifies Mr. Lovewell, sister?

Miss S. Pretty peevish soul! O, my dear, grave, romantic sister! a perfect philosopher in petticoats! Love, and a cottage! eh, Fanny? Ah, give me indifference and a coach and six!

Fan. And why not a coach and six without the indifference? But pray, when is this happy marriage of your's to be celebrated? I long to give you joy.

Miss S. In a day or two: I cannot tell exactly. Oh, my dear sister! I must mortify her a little: (*Aside.*) I know you have a pretty taste. Pray, give me your opinion of my jewels. How do you like the style of this esclavage. (*Shewing jewels.*)

Fan. Extremely handsome, and well fancied.

Miss S. What d'ye think of these bracelets? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds to one, and Sir John's to the other; and this pair of ear-rings, set transparent. Here, the tops, you see, will take off, to wear in a morning, or in an undress: how d'yc like them?

Fan. Very much, I assure you. Bless me, sister! you have a prodigious quantity of jewels: you'll be the very queen of diamonds.

Miss S. Ha, ha, ha! very well, my dear! I shall be as fine as a little queen indeed. I have a bouquet to come home to-morrow, made up of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts; jewels of all colours, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixed; the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life! The jeweller says I shall set out with as many diamonds as anybody in town, except Lady Brilliant, and Polly What-d'ye-call-it, Lord Squander's kept mistress.

Fan. But what are your wedding-clothes, sister?

Miss S. O, white and silver, to be sure, you know. I bought them at Sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlour behind the shop, consulting Lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

Fan. Fie, sister! how could you be so abominably provoking?

Miss S. Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knights' ladies. Did you ever observe the airs of Lady Lutestring, dressed in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's-hall; whilst the civil smirking Sir Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face as close as a new cut yew hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter like a bad shilling?

Fan. Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much. If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a by-word in the city. You must never venture on the inside of Temple-bar again.

Miss S. Never do I desire it: never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor-square! far, far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick, and Farringdon Without and Within! My heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at court. Gilt chariot! pieballed horses! laced liveries! and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—"Who is that young lady? Who is she?" "Lady Melvil, ma'am!"—Lady Melvil! my ears tingle at the sound. And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking, "Any news upon 'Change?" to cry, "Well, Sir John! anything new from Arthur's?" or to say to some other woman of quality, "Was your ladyship at the Duchess of Rubber's last night? Did you call at Lady Thunder's? In the immensity of crowd, I swear I did not see you. Scarce a soul at the Opera last Saturday. Shall I see you at Carlisle-house next Thursday?" Oh, the dear beau monde! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

Fan. And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me; no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

Miss S. (*Affectedly.*) You? You're above pity. You would not change conditions with me. You're over head and ears in love, you know. Nay, for that matter, if Mr. Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very comfortably, I dare say. He will mind his business; you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family; and once in a season, perhaps, you'll sit

together in a front box at a benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing-master's, you know; and perhaps I may meet you in the summer, with some other citizens, at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations. You sha'n't want my countenance, I assure you.

Fan. Oh, you're too kind, sister!

Enter MRS. HEIDELBERG.

Mrs. H. Here this evening! I vow and pertest we shall scarce have time to provide for them. Oh, my dear! (*to Miss Sterling*) I am glad to see you're not quite in a dish-abilie. Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

Miss S. To-night, ma'am?

Mrs. H. Yes, my dear; to-night. Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles. Lord! I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lutestring. Where is this dawdle of a housekeeper?

Enter TRUSTY.

Oh, here, Trusty! do you know that people of quality are expected here this evening?

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Well; do you be sure now that everything is done in the most genteelest manner, and to the honour of the family.

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Well, but mind what I say to you.

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. H. His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber; d'ye hear? and Sir John in the blue damask-room: his lordship's valet-de-chamb in the opposite.

Trus. But Mr. Lovewell is come down; and you know that's his room, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Well, well; Mr. Lovewell may make shift, or get a bed at the George. But harkye,

Trus. Ma'am! [*Trusty.*]

Mrs. H. Get the great dining-room in order as soon as possible. Unpaper the curtains, take the kivers off the couch and the chairs; and, do you hear? take the China dolls out of my closet, and put them on the mantelpiece immediately.

Trus. Yes, ma'am. (*Going.*)

Mrs. H. And mind, as soon as his lordship comes in, be sure you set all their heads a-nodding.

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Be gone, then! fly, this instant! Where's my brother, Sterling?

Trus. Talking to the butler, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Very well. [*Exit Trusty.*] Miss Fanny, I pertest I did not see you before. Lord, child! what's the matter with you?

Fan. With me? nothing, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Bless me! why your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colours, I vow and pertest. And then you have drest yourself as loose and as big! I declare, there is not such a thing to be seen now, as a young woman with a fine waist. You all make yourselves as round as Mrs. Deputy Barter. Go, child! You know the quality will be here by-and-by. Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen. [*Exit Fanny.*] She is gone away in tears; absolutely crying, I vow and pertest. This ridiculous love! we must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect natural of the girl.

Miss S. Poor soul! she can't help it. (*Affectedly.*)

Mrs. H. Well, my dear; now I shall have an opportunity of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning Sir John Melvil's behaviour to you.

Miss S. Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But indeed, ma'am, I cannot be persuaded but that Sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks, and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family. I have heard of flames and darts, but Sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

Mrs. H. Oh, fie, my dear; I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of

your poor sister. What you complain of as coldness and indifference, is nothing but the extreme gentility of his address; an exact picture of the manners of quality.

Miss S. O, he is the very mirror of complaisance; full of formal bows and set speeches. I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him. [*of who, pray?*]

Mrs. H. Jealous! I say jealous, indeed. Jealous

Miss S. My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favourite than I am; and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

Mrs. H. Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, cannot distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the family? Between you and your sister, for instance; or me and my brother? Be advised by me, child. It is all purliteness and good-breeding. Nobody knows the quality better than I do.

Miss S. In my mind, the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than Sir John. He is full of attentions to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizened face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

Enter STERLING.

Ster. No fish? Why, the pond was dragged but yesterday morning; there's carp and tench in the hoat. Plague on't! if that dog, Lovewell, had any thought, he would have brought down a turbot, or some of the land-carriage mackerel.

Mrs. H. Lord, brother! I am afraid his lordship and Sir John will not arrive while it is light.

Ster. I warrant you. But pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be dressed to-morrow, and some venison; and let the gardener cut some pine-apples, and get out some ice. I'll answer for wine, I warrant you. I'll give them such a glass of champagne as they never drank in their lives; no, not at a duke's table.

Mrs. H. Pray now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of quality. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff, and that will keep you awake. And don't burst out with your horrible loud horse-laugh. It is monstrous vulgar.

Ster. Never fear, sister. Who have we here?

Mrs. H. It is Mons. Cantoon, the Swish gentleman that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest.

Enter CANTON.

Ster. Ah, mounseer! your servant. I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

Can. Mosh oblige to Mons. Sterling. Ma'am, I am yours: Matemoiselle, I am your—(*Bowing round.*)

Mrs. H. Your humble servant, Mr. Cantoon!

Can. Kiss your hand, matam!

Ster. Well, mounseer; and what news of your good family? When are we to see his lordship and Sir John?

Can. Mons. Sterling, mi Lor Ogleby and Sir Jean Melvil will be here in one quarter hour.

Ster. I am glad to hear it.

Mrs. H. O, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afraid of some accident. Will you please to have anything, Mr. Cantoon, after your journey?

Can. No, tank you, ma'am.

[*sir?*]

Mrs. H. Shall I go and shew you the apartments,

Can. You do me great honour, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Come, then! Come, my dear! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.—SCENE I.—*An Ante-Room to Lord Ogleby's bed-chamber. Table with chocolate, and small case for medicines.*

BRUSH and Chambermaid discovered.

Brush. You shall stay, my dear, I insist upon it.

Cham. Nay pray, sir, don't be so positive; I cannot stay indeed.

Brush. You shall drink one cup to our better acquaintance.

Cham. I seldom drinks chocolate; and, if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one. If my lord should wake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or Madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frightened to death; besides, I have had my tea already this morning: I'm sure I hear my lord. *(In a fright.)*

Brush. No, no, madam, don't flutter yourself. The moment my lord wakes, he rings his bell, which I answer sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

[ing—

Cham. But should he come upon us without ring—

Brush. I'll forgive him if he does. This key *(Takes a phial out of the case)* locks him up till I please to let him out.

Cham. La! sir, that's potecary's stuff.

Brush. It is so; but without this he can no more get out of bed, than he can read without spectacles. *(Sips.)* What with qualms, age, rheumatism, and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding-up, to set him a-going for the day.

Cham. (Sips.) That's prodigious indeed. *(Sips.)* My lord seems quite in a decay.

Brush. Yes, he's quite a spectacle: *(Sips.)*—a mere corpse, till he is revived and refreshed from our little magazine here. When the restorative pills and cordial waters warm his stomach, and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart, and then he sets up for the lover, the rake, and the fine gentleman.

Cham. (Sips.) Poor gentleman! but should the Swish gentleman come upon us. *(Frightened.)*

Brush. Why then the English gentleman would be very angry. No foreigner would break in upon my privacy. *(Sips.)* But I can assure you, Monsieur Canton is otherwise employed. He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast: ha, ha, ha! Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably. My lord's chocolate is remarkably good; he won't touch a drop, but what comes from Italy.

Cham. (Sipping.) 'Tis very fine indeed! *(Sips.)* and charmingly perfumed: it smells for all the world like our young ladies' dressing-boxes.

Brush. You have an excellent taste, madam; and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking. *(Takes them out of a drawer in the table.)* And in return, I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips. *(Kisses her.)* A small return of favours, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement agreeable to us both. *(He bows, she courtesies.)* Come, pray sit down. Your young ladies are fine girls, faith! *(Sips.)* though, upon my soul, I am quite of my old lord's mind about them; and were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest. *(Sips.)*

Cham. Miss Fanny! The most affablest, and the most best-natur'd creter!

Brush. And the eldest a little haughty or so.

Cham. More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself; but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. *(Sips.)*

Brush. By no means; but you cannot hurt it with us. We don't consider tempers: we want money, Mrs. Nancy. Give us plenty of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars; ha, ha, ha!

Cham. Bless me, here's somebody! *(Bell rings.)* Oh, 'tis my lord! Well, your servant, Mr. Brush. I'll clean the cups in the next room.

Brush. Do so; but never mind the bell: I sha'n't go this half hour. Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

Cham. Not for the world, Mr. Brush. I'll be here to set all things to rights; but I must not drink tea indeed; and so, your servant.

[Exit, with teaboard. Bell rings again.]

Brush. Yes, yes; I hear you. It is impossible to stupify one's self in the country for a week, without some little flirting with the abigails. This is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan for her. *(Bell rings.)* O, my lord! *(Going.)*

Enter CANTON, with newspapers in his hand.

Can. Monsieur Brush! Maistre Brush! my lor stirra yet?

Brush. He has just rung his bell: I am going to him. *[Exit.]*

Can. Dépêchez vous donc. *(Puts on his spectacles.)* I wish de deveil had all dese papiers. I forget as fast as I read. De Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Chronique, and so dey all go l'un après l'autre. I must get some nouvelle for my lor, or he'll be enragé contre moi. Voyons! *(Reads the paper.)* Here is noting but Anti-Sejanus and advertise—

Enter Maid with chocolate things.

Vat you want, chil?

Maid. Only the chocolate things, sir.

Can. O, ver well; dat is good girl: and very prit too. *[Exit Maid.]*

Lord O. (Within.) Canton! he, he! *(Coughs.)* Canton!

Can. I come, my—Vat shall I do? I have no news: he will make great tintamarre!

Lord O. (Within.) Canton! I say, Canton! Where are you?

Enter LORD OGLEBY, leaving on BRUSH.

Can. Here, my lor! I ask pardon, my lor, I have not finish de papiers.

Lord O. D—n your pardon and your papiers; I want you here, Canton.

Can. Den I run, dat is all. *(Shuffles along. Lord Ogleby leans upon Canton too, and comes forward.)*

Lord O. You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture: you have the language and the impertinence of the French, with the laziness of Dutchmen.

Can. 'Tis very true, my lor; I can't help—

Lord O. (Cries out.) O Diavolo!

Can. You are not in pain, I hope, my lor?

Lord O. Indeed, but I am, my lor. That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-coloured ditch, which he calls a canal; and what with the dew and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screwed to my body.

Can. A littel veritable eau d'arquibusade vil set all to right. *(Lord Ogleby sits down, and Brush gives chocolate.)*

Lord O. Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

Brush. Here, my lord! *(Pours out.)*

Lord O. Quelle nouvelle avez vous, Canton?

Can. A great deal of papier, but no news at all.

Lord O. What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow?

Can. Oui, my lor, I have little advertise here vil give you more plaisir den all de lies about noting at all. La voila! *(Puts on his spectacles.)*

Lord O. Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

Can. I vil, my lor. *(Reads.)* Dere is no question bat dut de cosmetique royale vil utterly take away all heats, pimples, frecks, oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de wrinkle of old age, &c. &c. A great deal more, my lor. Be sure to ask for de cosmetique royale, signed by de docteur own hand. Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good men vil tink. Eh bien, my lor?

Lord O. Eh bien, Canton! Will you purchase any?

Can. For you, my lor?

Lord O. For me, you old puppy! for what?

Can. My lor!

Lord O. Do I want cosmetics?

Can. My lor!

Lord O. Look in my face; come, be sincere. Does it want the assistance of art?

Can. (With his spectacles.) En verité, non. 'Tis

very smooth and brilliant; but tote dat you might take a littel by way of prevention.

Lord O. You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do. Try it upon your own face, Canton; and if it has any effect, the doctor cannot have a better proof of the efficacy of his nostrum. The surfeit water, Brush! (*Brush pours out.*) What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with? Eh!

Brush. Very well to marry in, my lord; but it would never do to live with.

Lord O. You are right, Brush; there is no washing the blackmoor white. Mr. Sterling will never get rid of Blackfriars; always taste of the Borachio; and the poor woman, his sister, is so busy, and so notable, to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over the fatigue of her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation! I think the daughters are tolerable. Where's my cephalic snuff? (*Brush gives him a box.*) [at noting else, ma foi.]

Can. Dey tink so of you, my lor; for dey look

Lord O. Did they? Why, I think they did a little. Where's my glass? (*Brush puts one on the table.*) The youngest is delectable. (*Takes snuff.*)

Can. O oui, my lor, very delect inteed; she made doux yeux at you, my lor.

Lord O. She was particular. The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spirits of her father and aunt happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother. Some peppermint-water, Brush. How happy is it, Canton, for young ladies in general, that people of quality overlook everything in their marriage contract but their fortune.

Can. C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

Lord O. Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bedside. (*Brush goes for it.*) Canton, do you wait in the ante-chamber, and let nobody interrupt me till I call you.

Can. Mush good may do your lordship. [*Exit.*]

Lord O. (*To Brush, who brings the pamphlet.*) And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. [*Exit Brush.*] What can I possibly do among these women here, with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. (*Gets off his chair.*) Eh! courage, my lor! by heavens, I'm another creature! (*Hums and dances a little.*) It will do, faith! Bravo, mylor! These girls have absolutely inspir'd me. If they are for a game of romps; me voilà prêt! (*Sings and dances.*) Oh! that's an ugly twinge; but it's gone. I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. (*Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass, and takes out rouge; while he is painting himself, a knocking at the door.*) Who's there? I won't be disturb'd.

Can. (*Within.*) My lor! my lor! here is Monsieur Sterling, to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

Lord O. What a fellow! - (*Softly.*) I am extremely honoured by Mr. Sterling. Why don't you see him in, monsieur? (*Aloud.*) I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. (*Softly. Door opens.*) Oh, my dear Mr. Sterling, you do me a great deal of honour.

Enter STERLING and LOVEWELL.

Ster. I hope, my lord, that your lordship slept well last night. I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have. I spare no pains to get them, nor money to buy them. His majesty, God bless him! don't sleep upon a better out of his palace; and if I had said in too, I hope no treason, my lord.

Lord O. Your beds are like everything else about you, incomparable! They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr. Sterling.

Ster. What say you then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? You must see my water by daylight, and my walks, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flowering trees, and my bed

of Dutch tulips. Matters look'd but dim last night, my lord. I feel the dew in my great toe; but I would put on a cut shoe, that I might be able to walk you about: I may be laid up to-morrow.

Lord O. I pray heaven you may. (*Aside.*)

Ster. What say you, my lord?

Lord O. I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast: Mr. Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world; he, he, he, he!

Can. Bravissimo, my lor! ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ster. They shall meet your lordship in the garden; we won't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner; and in the evening you shall go the grand tour, as I call it; ha, ha, ha!

Lord O. Not a foot, I hope, Mr. Sterling; consider your gout, my good friend: you'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness; he, he, he!

Can. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis admirable, en verité!

Ster. If my young man here (*to Lovewell*) would but laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at your's, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

Lord O. What say you, Canton, will you take my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune.

Can. But when your lordship is out of spirits.

Lord O. Well said, Canton! But here comes my nephew, to play his part.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVILLE.

Well, Sir John, what news from the island of love? Have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

Sir J. I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

Lord O. I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir. What poor things, Mr. Sterling, these very young fellows are! They make love with faces as if they were burying the dead; though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living; eh, Mr. Sterling? [lord; ha, ha, ha!]

Ster. Not if they have enough to live upon, my

Can. Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.

Sir J. Prythee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden; I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly. (*Apart to Lovewell.*)

Love. We'll go together. (*Apart.*) If your lordship and Mr. Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.

[*Exeunt Sir John Melvil and Lovewell.*]

Ster. My girls are always ready; I make them rise soon, and to bed early; their husbands shall have them with good constitutions and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

Lord O. Fine things, Mr. Sterling!

Ster. Fine things, indeed, my lord! Ah, my lord, had you not run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord.

Lord O. Very pleasant; he, he, he!

Ster. Here's mounseer now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but having little to eat, and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out. Eating and drinking kills us all.

Lord O. Very pleasant, I protest. What a vulgar dog! (*Aside.*)

Can. My lor so old as me! He is chicken to me; and look like a boy to pauvre me.

Ster. Ha, ha, ha! Well said, mounseer: keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world. Ha, ha, ha! But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden; we have but a little time to breakfast. I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, and then for the hot rolls and butter! [*Exit.*]

Lord O. I shall attend you with pleasure. Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts

Can. C'est un barbare. [of it.]

Lord O. He is a vulgar dog; and if there was not

so much money in the family, which I can't do without, I would leave him and his hot rolls and butter directly. Come along, monsieur! [Exit.]

SCENE II.—*The Garden.*

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL and LOVEWELL.

Love. In my room this morning? Impossible.

Sir J. Before five this morning, I promise you.

Love. On what occasion?

Sir J. I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you that I could not sleep in my bed; but I found that you could not sleep neither. The bird was flown, and the nest long since cold. Where was you, Lovewell?

Love. Pooh! pr'ythee, ridiculous.

Sir J. Come, now, which was it; Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul too; or— [business.]

Love. Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your

Sir J. Well, but where was you, Lovewell?

Love. Walking, writing; what signifies where I was?

Sir J. Walking! yes, I dare say. It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet, refreshing showers, to walk in! No, no, Lovewell. Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids—

Love. But your business! your business, Sir John!

Sir J. Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

Love. Psha!

Sir J. Poor Lovewell! he can't bear it, I see. (Aside.) She charged you not to kiss and tell, eh, Lovewell? However, though you will not honour me with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine. What do you think of Miss Sterling?

Love. What do I think of Miss Sterling?

Sir J. Ay, what do you think of her?

Love. An odd question! but I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

Sir J. All mischief and malice, I doubt.

Love. How!

Sir J. But her person: what d'ye think of that?

Love. Pretty and agreeable.

Sir J. A little grisette thing.

Love. What is the meaning of all this?

Sir J. I'll tell you. You must know, Lovewell, that notwithstanding all appearances—(a loud laugh heard without.) We are interrupted. When they are gone, I'll explain.

Enter LORD OGLEBY, STERLING, CANTON, MRS. HEIDELBERG, MISS STERLING, and FANNY.

Lord O. Great improvements indeed, Mr. Sterling; wonderful improvements! The four seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the bason with Neptune in the middle, are in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many rich figures as the man at Hyde-park corner.

Ster. The chief pleasure of a country house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expense, not I. This is quite another guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun, smack smooth, as you see. Then I made a green-house out of the old laundry, and turned the brew-house into a pinery. The high octagon summer-house, you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East Indian captain, who has turned away a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches, and chariots, and chaises, pass and repass under your eye. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord.

Lord O. No, I thank you, Mr. Sterling.

Ster. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle; and so you shall say, my lord.

Lord O. Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a can of flip, Mr. Sterling; for it looks like a cabin in the air. If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

[wind.]

Mrs. H. My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord. But you'll excuse him. I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste. In the evening, I shall hope for the honour of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a sullybub warin from the cow.

Lord O. I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs. Heidelberg, the very flower of delicacy and cream of politeness.

Mrs. H. O, my lord! (Leers at Lord Ogleby.)

Lord O. O, madam! (Leers at Mrs. Heidelberg.)

Ster. How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

Lord O. A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true-lover's knot.

Ster. Ay, here's none of your strait lines here; but all taste; zigzag, crinkum-crankum, in and out, right and left, to and again; twisting and turning like a worm, my lord.

Lord O. Admirably laid out indeed, Mr. Sterling! one can hardly see an inch beyond one's nose anywhere in these walks. You are a most excellent economist of your land, and make a little go a great way. It lies together in as small parcels as if it were placed in pots out at your window in Gracechurch-street.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lord O. What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

Can. Ah! que cette similitude est drôle! so clever what you say, my lor!

Lord O. You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about? (To Fanny.)

Fan. Only making up a nosegay, my lord! Will your lordship do me the honour of accepting it?

Lord O. I'll wear it next my heart, madam. I see the young creature dotes on me. (Aside.)

Miss S. Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook, or the nurse, carries to town, on a Monday morning, for a beaupot. Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose and a sprig of sweetbriar?

Lord O. The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy. A little jealous, poor soul! (Aside.)

Ster. Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

Mrs. H. You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother.

Lord O. Not at all, madam. We're in the garden of Eden, you know; in the region of perpetual spring, youth, and beauty! (Leers at the women.)

Mrs. H. Quite the man of qualaty, I vow and perfest. (Aside.)

Can. Take-a my arm, mylor! (L. O. leans on him.)

Ster. I'll only shew his lordship my ruins, and the cascade, and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go in to breakfast.

Lord O. Ruins, did you say, Mr. Sterling?

Ster. Ay; ruins, my lord; and they are reckoned very fine ones, too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

Lord O. (Going, stops.) What steeple's that we see yonder? The parish church, I suppose.

Ster. Ha, ha, ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord! it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

Lord O. Very ingenious indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than this I see before me: (leers at the women :) simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive. Get away, Canton! (Pushes Canton away.) I want no assistance; I'll walk with the

Ster. This way, my lord.

[ladies.]

Lord O. Lead on, sir. We young folks here will follow you. Madam; Miss Sterling; Miss Fanny; I attend you. [Exit after Ster., gallanting the ladies.]

Can. (*Following.*) He is cock o'de game, ma foi! [*Exit.*]

Sir J. Hark ye, Lovewell; you must not go. At length, thank Heaven! I have an opportunity to unbosom. I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

Love. Be assured you may depend upon me.

Sir J. You must know then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

Love. How!

Sir J. It will be no match, Lovewell.

Love. No match?

Sir J. No.

Love. You amaze me. What should prevent it?

Sir J. I.

Love. You! Wherefore?

Sir J. I don't like her.

Love. Very plain indeed! I never supposed that you were extremely devoted to her from inclination; but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience rather than affection.

Sir J. Very true. I came into the family without any impressions on my mind; with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as soon as another. I looked upon love, serious sober love, as a chimera, and marriage as a thing of course, as you know most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest votaries. In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

Love. Another? So, so! here will be fine work. And pray who is she?

Sir J. Who is she? who can she be but Fanny; the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny?

Love. Fanny! What Fanny?

Sir J. Fanny Sterling, her sister. Is not she an angel, Lovewell?

Love. Her sister? Confusion! (*Aside.*) You must not think of it, Sir John.

Sir J. Not think of it! I can think of nothing else. Nay, tell me, Lovewell, was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her? You seem confounded. Why don't you answer me?

Love. Indeed, Sir John, this event gives me infinite concern. Why did not you break this affair to the family before?

Sir J. Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or perplexity? Nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet I think I know Mr. Stirling so well, that strange as my proposal may appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

Love. But even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

Sir J. You are deceived a little in that particular.

Love. You'll find I'm in the right.

Sir J. I have some little reason to think otherwise. [*already?*]

Love. You have not declared your passion to her

Sir J. Yes, I have. [*receive it?*]

Love. Indeed! And—and—and how did she

Sir J. I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman, without receiving some little encouragement. [*encouragement?*]

Love. Encouragement! Did she give you any

Sir J. I don't know what you call encouragement; but she blushed, and cried, and desired me not to think of it any more: upon which I pressed her hand; kissed it; swore she was an angel; and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

Love. And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

Sir J. Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised; and she got away from me too before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

Love. I! a letter! I had rather have nothing—

Sir J. Nay, you promised me your assistance; and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion. You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

Love. As to that, I—your commands, you know; that is, if she—Indeed, Sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

Sir J. Well, well, that's my concern. Ha! there she goes, by heaven! along that walk yonder, d'ye see? I'll go to her immediately!

Love. You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing. [*universe.*]

Sir J. I would not lose this opportunity for the

Love. Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits. The shock will be too much for her. (*Detains him.*)

Sir J. Nothing shall prevent me. Ha! now she turns into another walk. Let me go. (*Breaks from him.*) I shall lose her. (*Going, turns back.*) Be sure now to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you. [*Exit hastily.*]

Love. 'Sdeath! I can't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face! I shall break out before my time. This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him; I am sure she could not. Ha! they are turning into the walk, and coming this way. Shall I leave the place? Leave him to solicit my wife? I can't submit to it. They come nearer and nearer. If I stay, it will look suspicious. It may betray us, and incense him. They are here. I must go. I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world! [*Exit.*]

Re-enter SIR JOHN MELVIL and FANNY.

Fan. Leave me, Sir John; I beseech you, leave me! Nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations, which are an affront to my character, and an injury to your own honour?

Sir J. I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it: but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse. Consider, madam, that the future happiness of my life depends on my present application to you. Consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are perhaps the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

Fan. For shame, for shame, Sir John! Think of your previous engagements. Think of your own situation, and think of mine. What have you discovered in my conduct, that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you should venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing. Let me be gone.

Sir J. Nay, stay, madam, but one moment. Your sensibility is too great. Engagements! what engagements have been pretended on either side, more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of a matrimonial negotiation, with a blind submission to your father and Lord Ogleby; but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in your's.

Fan. Have a care, Sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretences of the heart, half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of your's despise them for it.

Sir J. Affection, you will allow, is involuntary. We cannot always direct it to the object on which it should fix; but when it is once inviolably attach-

ed, inviolably as mine is to you, it often creates reciprocal affection. When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and I hoped with some compassion.

Fan. You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit—nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment at your behaviour, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you in honour to my sister; and be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph that must result from the blackest treachery to her. (*Going, he stops her.*)

Sir J. One word, and I have done. Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me, or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united. Now, as they cannot, shall not be connected, otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness, and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you, and hope to propose terms agreeable to Mr. Sterling: if then you don't absolutely loath, abhor, and scorn me; if there is no other happier man—

Fan. Hear me, sir; hear my final determination. Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them; were my heart for ever to remain disengaged to any other—I could not listen to your proposals. What! you, on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I, living under the same roof with her, bound not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace, the peace of a whole family, and that of my own too! Away, away, Sir John! At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror. Nay, you must detain me no longer; I will go.

Sir J. Do not leave me in absolute despair. Give me a glimpse of hope. (*Falls on his knees.*)

Fan. I cannot. Pray, Sir John. (*Struggles to go.*)

Sir J. Shall this hand be given to another? (*Kisses her hand.*) No, I cannot endure it. My whole soul is your's, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

Re-enter MISS STERLING.

Fan. Ha! my sister here! Rise, for shame,

Sir J. Miss Sterling! (*Rises.*) [*Sir John.*

Miss S. I beg pardon, sir! You'll excuse me, madam; I have broke in upon you a little inopportunely, I believe; but I did not mean to interrupt you: I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotion.

Sir J. I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but—

Miss S. O dear, Sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology; the thing explains itself.

Sir J. It will soon, madam. In the meantime, I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr. Sterling of the honour and integrity of my intentions. And—and—your humble servant, madam!

[*Exit in confusion.*]

Miss S. Respect! Insolence! Esteem! Very fine truly. And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister! will you convince my papa too of the integrity of your intentions?

Fan. Do not upbraid me, my dear sister. Indeed I don't deserve it. Believe me, you can't be more offended at his behaviour than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

Miss S. Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam; it gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you. A base fellow! As for you, miss, the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good-nature, never imposed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, envious, and deceitful.

Fan. Indeed you wrong me.

Miss S. Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure!

Did not I find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty? No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

Fan. Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

Miss S. We shall try that, madam. I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt, for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. [*Exit.*]

Fan. How unhappy I am! My distresses multiply upon me. Mr. Lovewell must now become acquainted with Sir John's behaviour to me, and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed by fortunate circumstances to forgive any transgressions, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcilably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace. Yet, at all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.—SCENE I.—A Hall.

Enter a Servant, conducting in SERGEANT FLOWER and COUNSELLORS TRAVERSE and TRUEMAN, all booted.

Serv. This way, if you please, gentlemen. My master is at breakfast with the family at present, but I'll let him know, and he will wait on you immediately.

Flow. Mighty well, young man, mighty well.

Serv. Please to favour me with your names, gentlemen.

Flow. Let Mr. Sterling know, that Mr. Sergeant Flower, and two other gentlemen of the bar, are come to wait on him according to his appointment.

Serv. I will, sir. (*Going.*)

Flow. And harkye, young man. (*Servant returns.*) Desire my servant—Mr. Sergeant Flower's servant—to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall, with my portmanteau.

Serv. I will, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Flow. Well, gentlemen; the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits. Let me see; the Home, the Midland, and Western; ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several destinations. Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

Trav. The day after to-morrow.

Flow. That is commission-day with us at Warwick, too; but my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper, so it will be time enough if I am there next morning. Besides I've half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again; so I'll take the evening before me, and then *currente calamo*, as I say, eh, Traverse?

Trav. True; and pray, Mr. Sergeant, are you concerned in Jones and Thomas, at Lincoln?

Flow. I am: for the plaintiff.

Trav. And what do you think on't?

Flow. A nonsuit.

Trav. I thought so.

Flow. Oh, no manner of doubt on't—*luce clarius*—we have no right in us. We have but one chance.

Trav. What's that?

Flow. Why, my lord chief does not go the circuit this time, and my brother Puzzle being in the commission, the cause will come on before him.

True. Ay, that may do indeed; if you can but throw dust in the eyes of the defendant's counsel.

Flow. True. Mr. Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair?

True. I am, sir. I have the honour to be re-

lated to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire; go to the Western circuit, and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

Flow. Ha! and pray, Mr. Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

True. About nine years and three quarters.

Flow. Ha! I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before. I wish you success, young gentleman!

Enter STERLING.

Ster. Oh, Mr. Sergeant Flower, I am glad to see you. Your servant, Mr. Sergeant. Gentlemen, your servant. Well, are all matters concluded? Has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold tight and strong? Eh, master serjeant?

Flow. My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir; but then, *serius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr. Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do. My clerk has brought the writings, and all other instruments along with him; and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth.

Ster. But that d—n'd mortgage of sixty thousand pounds. There don't appear to be any other incumbrances, I hope?

Trav. I can answer for that, sir; and that will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's portion. You agree, on your part, to come down with eighty thousand pounds?

Ster. Down on the nail. Aye, aye, my money is ready to-morrow if he pleases. He shall have it in India bonds, or notes, or how he chooses. Your lords and your dukes, and your people at the court end of the town, stick at payments sometimes. Debts unpaid, no credit lost with them; but no fear of us substantial fellows, eh, Mr. Sergeant?

Flow. Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine, and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate, for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which above-mentioned Ogleby estate, a jointure of two thousand pounds per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster, and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs male of Sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling lawfully to be begotten.

Trav. Very true; and Sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate, as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford, amounting to between two and three thousand pounds per annum, and at the death of Mr. Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand—

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Ster. Ah, sir John! Here we are, hard at it; paving the road to matrimony. First the lawyers, then comes the doctor. Let us but despatch the long-robe, we shall soon get pudding-sleeves to work, I warrant you.

Sir J. I am sorry to interrupt you, sir; but I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me. Having something very particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

(*To Ster.*)

Ster. Ay, with all my heart! Gentlemen,—Mr. Sergeant,—you'll excuse it; business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

[*day after.*]

Flow. I must be at Warwick, Mr. Sterling, the

Ster. Nay, nay, I sha'n't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you. My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses. Will you take a turn in the garden, and view some of my improvements before dinner? or will you amuse yourself on

the green, with a game at bowls and a cool tankard? My servants shall attend you. Do you choose any other refreshment? Call for what you please; do as you please; make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you. Here, Thomas! Harry! William! wait on these gentlemen!—(*Follows the Lawyers out, bawling and talking, and then returns to Sir John.*) And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, Sir John?

Sir J. After having carried the negotiation between our families to so great a length; after having assented so readily to all your proposals, as well as received so many instances of your cheerful compliance with the demands made on our part, I am extremely concerned, Mr. Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness.

Ster. Uneasiness! what uneasiness? Where business is transacted as it ought to be, and the parties understand one another, there can be no uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife; on the same conditions I agree to receive you as a son-in-law; and as to all the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

Sir J. Pardon me, sir, more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of. I am myself, at this instant, in a state of inexpressible embarrassment; Miss Sterling, I know, is extremely disconcerted too; and unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

Ster. What the deuce is all this? I don't understand a single syllable.

Sir J. In one word, then, it will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfil my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

Ster. How, Sir John? Do you mean to put an affront upon my family? What! refuse to—

Sir J. Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront nor forsake your family. My only fear is, that you should desert me; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family, by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

Ster. Why, did you not tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter?

Sir J. True. But you have another daughter, sir.

Ster. Well!

Sir J. Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her; nay, Miss Sterling herself is also apprised of it; and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will no doubt recommend her to a person of equal, if not superior rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

Ster. Mighty fine, truly! Why what the plague do you make of us, Sir John? Do you come to market for my daughters, like servants at a statute-fair? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the grand seignior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave-trade with them, and—

Sir J. A moment's patience, sir. Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your family; and even now I am desirous to atone for my transgression, by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

Ster. Compensation! what compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, Sir John?

Sir J. Come, come, Mr. Sterling; I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you; and you shall see that I don't desire a change of measures

for my own gratification, without endeavouring to make it advantageous to you.

Ster. What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, Sir John?

Sir J. I'll tell you, sir. You know that by the articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of eighty thousand pounds.

Ster. Well!

Sir J. Now, if you will but consent to my waiving that marriage—

Ster. I agree to your waiving that marriage? Impossible, Sir John!

Sir J. I hope not, sir; as, on my part, I will agree to waive my right to thirty thousand pounds of the fortune I was to receive with her.

Ster. Thirty thousand, d'ye say?

Sir J. Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of fourscore.

Ster. Fifty thousand—(Pausing.)

Sir J. Instead of fourscore.

Ster. Why, why, there may be something in that. Let me see. Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsy with fourscore. But how can this be, Sir John? for you know I am to pay this money into the hands of my Lord Ogleby, who, I believe, between you and me, Sir John, is not overstocked with ready money at present; and threescore thousand of it, you know, is to go to pay off the present encumbrances on the estate, Sir John.

Sir J. That objection is easily obviated. Ten of the twenty thousand, which would remain as a surplus of the fourscore, after paying off the mortgage, was intended by his lordship for my use, that we might set off with some little eclat on our marriage; and the other ten for his own. Ten thousand pounds, therefore, I shall be able to pay you immediately; and for the remaining twenty thousand, you shall have a mortgage on that part of the estate which is to be made over to me, with whatever security you shall require for the regular payment of the interest, till the principal is duly discharged.

Ster. Why, to do you justice, Sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal; and since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family—

Sir J. Nothing was ever further from my thoughts, Mr. Sterling. And after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary; such things happen every day; and as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place, nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

Ster. True, true; and since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir J. The very thing!

Ster. Odso! I had quite forgot. We are reckoning without our host here. There is another difficulty.

Sir J. You alarm me. What can that be?

Ster. I can't stir a step in this business without consulting my sister, Heidelberg. The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offence.

Sir J. But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent.

Ster. I don't know that; Betsy is her darling, and I can't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favourite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first; and by that time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

Sir J. I'll fly to her immediately. You promise

Ster. I do. [mc your assistance?

Sir J. Ten thousand thanks for it! And now, success attend me! (Going.)

Ster. Harkye, Sir John! (*Sir J. returns.*) Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, Sir John.

Sir J. O, I am dumb, I am dumb, Sir. (Going.)

Ster. You'll remember it is thirty thousand?

Sir J. To be sure I do.

Ster. But, Sir John! one thing more. (*Sir J. returns.*) My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

Sir J. Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! (Offering to go.)

Ster. (Holding him.) And when everything is agreed, we must give each other a bond to be held fast to the bargain.

Sir J. To be sure. A bond, by all means; a bond, or whatever, you please. [Exit hastily.]

Ster. I should have thought of more conditions. He's in a humour to give me everything. Why, what mere children are your fellows of quality, that cry for a plaything one minute, and throw it by the next! As changeable as the weather, and as uncertain as the stocks. Special fellows to drive a bargain! and yet they are to take care of the interest of the nation, truly! Here does this whirligig man of fashion offer to give up thirty thousand pounds in hard money, with as much indifference as if it were a China orange. By this mortgage, I shall have a hold on his terra firma; and if he wants more money, as he certainly will, let him have children by my daughter or no, I shall have his whole estate in a net for the benefit of my family. Well, thus it is, that the children of citizens who have acquired fortunes, prove persons of fashion; and thus it is, that persons of fashion, who have ruined their fortunes, reduce the next generation to cits. [Exit.]

SCENE II.—Another Apartment.

Enter MRS. HEIDELBERG and MISS STERLING.

Miss S. This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable Miss Fanny, for you!

Mrs. H. My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her. With all her arts, she never could insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her, that deceives man, woman, and child, except you and me, niece.

Miss S. O, ay; she wants nothing but a crook in her hand, and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

Mrs. H. Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam, when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

Miss S. And then she's so mighty good to servants—"Pray, John, do this; pray, Thomas, do that: thank you, Jenny;"—and then so humble to her relations—"To be sure, papa;—as my aunt pleases;—my sister knows best." But with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be Lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

Mrs. H. She Lady Melvil! Compose yourself, niece. I'll ladyship her, indeed: a little creppin, cantin—She sha'n't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with Sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatenation here.

Miss S. There I was deceived; madam. I took all their whisperings and stealings into corners, to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but behold! their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr. Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

Mrs. H. My spurit to a T. My dear child! (*Kisses her.*) Mr. Heidelberg lost his election for member of parliament, because I would not demean myself to be slabbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesmongers, and tallow-chandlers. However, niece, I can't help disliking a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagucity makes me still suspect that there is

something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of Sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns too; but Fanny and Mr. Lovewell made quite another-guess sort of a figur! and were as perfect a picture of two distressed lovers as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to Sir John and Fanny, I want a matter-of-fact.

Miss S. Matter-of-fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not Sir John kneeling at her feet, and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love, and she all confusion? Is not that matter-of-fact? And did not Sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyer-men, get up from breakfast, and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that by this time he has made proposals to him to marry my sister. Oh, that some other person, an earl or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

Mrs. H. Be cool, child. You shall be Lady Melvil, in spite of all their caballins, if it costs me ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother indeed; but I'll make them all know who governs in this fammaly.

Miss S. As I live, madam, yonder comes Sir John. A base man! I can't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant. (*Disordered.*)

Mrs. H. Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child. I'll give it him, I warrant you; and by-and-by I'll come and let you know all that has past between us.

Miss S. Pray do, madam. (*Looking back.*) A vile wretch!

[*Exit in a rage.*]

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Sir J. Your most obedient humble servant, madam. (*Bowing very respectfully.*)

Mrs. H. Your servant, Sir John. (*Dropping a half curtsy and pouting.*)

Sir J. Miss Sterling's manner of quitting the room on my approach, and the visible coolness of your behaviour to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what passed this morning.

Mrs. H. I am very sorry, Sir John, to be made acquainted with anything that should induce me to change the opinion which I would always wish to entertain of a person of quality. (*Pouting.*)

Sir J. It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs. Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh circumstances, I flatter myself—

Mrs. H. You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behaviour to my niece, Sir John. And give me leave to tell you, Sir John, that you have been drawn into an action much beneath you, Sir John; and that I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling, as an affront to myself, Sir John. (*Warmly.*)

Sir J. I would not offend you for the world, madam; but when I am influenced by a partiality for another, however ill-founded, I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honour to renounce engagements which I could not fulfil so strictly as I ought; and that you will excuse the change in my inclinations, since the new object, as well as the first, has the honour of being your niece, madam.

Mrs. H. I disclaim her as a niece, Sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister; and the whole fammaly must disclaim her, for her monstrous baseness and treachery.

Sir J. Indeed she has been guilty of none, madam. Her hand and her heart are, I am sure, entirely at the disposal of yourself and Mr. Sterling. And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr. Sterling's consent, madam.

Mrs. H. Indeed?

Sir J. Quite certain, madam.

Enter STERLING unperceived.

Ster. (*Behind.*) So! they seem to be coming to terms already. I may venture to make my appearance. (*Sterling advances by degrees.*)

Mrs. H. To marry Fanny?

Sir J. Yes, madam.

[say?

Mrs. H. My brother has given his consent, you

Sir J. In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. (*Sees Sterling.*) Oh, here's Mr. Sterling, who will confirm what I have told you.

Mrs. H. What! have you consented to give up your eldest daughter in this manner, brother?

Ster. Give her up? heaven forbid! No, not give her up, sister; only in case that you—Zounds! I am afraid you have said too much, Sir John. (*Apart to Sir J.*)

Mrs. H. Yes, yes; I see now that it is true enough what my niece told me. You are all plotting and caballing against her. Pray, does Lord Ogleby know of this affair?

[it, madam.

Sir J. I have not yet made him acquainted with

Mrs. H. No, I warrant you. I thought so. And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last!

Ster. What! did not you consult my lord? Oh, fie for shame, Sir John!

Sir J. Nay, but Mr. Sterling—

Mrs. H. We, who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammalies, are to know nothing of the matter, till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosaty than to countenance such a perceding. And I could not have expected such behaviour from a person of your quality, Sir John. And as for you, brother—

Ster. Nay, nay, but hear me, sister.

Mrs. H. I am perfectly ashamed of you. Have you no spurr! no more concern for the honour of our fammaly than to consent—

Ster. Consent! I consent! As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent. Did I consent, Sir John?

Sir J. Not absolutely, without Mrs. Heidelberg's concurrence. But in case of her approbation—

Ster. Ay, in case, I grant you; that is, if my sister approved. But that's quite another thing, you know. (*To Mrs. H.*)

Mrs. H. Your sister approve, indeed! I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling. What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands, and exchanged for the younger? I am surprised how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

Ster. I tell you, I never did listen to it. Did not I say that I would be entirely governed by my sister, Sir John? And unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny—

Mrs. H. I agree to his marrying Fanny!—abominable! The man is absolutely out of his senses. Can't that wise head of your's foresee the consequence of all this, brother Sterling? Will Sir John take Fanny without a fortune? No! After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest? No! Does not this overturn the whole systum of the fammaly? Yes, yes, yes!

Ster. Do you see now what you've done? Don't betray me, Sir John. (*Apart to Sir J.*)

Mrs. H. You know I was always for my niece Betsy's marrying a person of the very first quality. That was my maxum: and, therefore, much the largest settlement was of course to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common councilman, for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

Sir J. But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

Mrs. H. What! at the expense of her elder sister? O fie, Sir John! How could you bear to hear such an indignaty, brother Sterling?

Ster. I! Nay, I sha'n't hear of it, I promise you. I can't hear of it, indeed, Sir John.

Mrs. H. But you have heard of it, brother Sterling; you know you have, and sent Sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I sha'n't forsake my niece, I assure you. Ah! if my poor dear Mr. Heidelberg, and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so.

Ster. Did I, Sir John? Nay, speak! Bring me off, or we are ruined. (*Apart to Sir J.*)

Sir J. Why, to be sure, to speak the truth—

Mrs. H. To speak the truth!—To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both. But have a care what you are about, brother! have a care, I say. The counsellors are in the house, I hear; and if everything is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years. I'll go over to Holland, and settle with Mr. Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own fammaly shall never be the better for a farden of my money, I promise you. [*Exit.*]

Ster. I thought so. I knew she would never agree to it. [*do, Mr. Sterling?*]

Sir J. 'Sdeath, how unfortunate! What can we

Ster. Nothing.

Sir J. What, must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

Ster. It can't be helped, Sir John. The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself, that she threatens to leave us. My brother Heidelberg was a warm man—a very warm man, and died worth a plum at least. A plum! ay, I warrant you, he died worth a plum and a half.

Sir J. Well; but if I—

Ster. And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents. and old South Sea annuities, besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to

Sir J. I can only say, sir— [*our family.*]

Ster. Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure,

Sir J. Nay, but I am willing to— [*Sir John.*]

Ster. Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so you see the balance is against you, Sir John.

Sir J. Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

Ster. I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any other person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

Sir J. I'll apply to him this very day. And if he should prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr. Sterling?

Ster. Ay, ay, I shall be glad to oblige you, when it is in my power; but as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so your servant, Sir John. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.—SCENE I.—A Room.

Enter MR. STERLING, MRS. HEIDELBERG, and MISS STERLING.

Ster. What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

Mrs. H. To-morrow morning: I've given orders

Ster. Indeed! [*about it already.*]

Mrs. H. Posatively.

Ster. But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

Mrs. H. Not half so odd as her behaviour, brother. This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

Ster. I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsy?

Miss. S. No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not. For all Fanny's baseness to me, I

am sure I would not do or say anything to hurt her with you or my aunt, for the world.

Mrs. H. Hold your tongue, Betsy; I will have my way. When she is packed off, everything will go on as it should do. Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can act with vigour on our part; and the sending her out of the way, shall be the purlunfary step to all the rest of my perceedings.

Ster. Well, but sister—

Mrs. H. It does not signify talking, brother Sterling, for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will. Come along, child. (*To Miss S.*) The postshay shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why I will; and so there's an end of the matter. (*Bounces out with Miss Sterling, then returns.*) One word more, brother Sterling. I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby of Sir John Melvil's behaviour. Do this, brother; show a proper regard for the honour of your fammaly yourself, and I shall thrown in my mite to the raising of it. If not—but now you know my mind: so act as you please, and take the consequences. [*Exit.*]

Ster. The devil's in the women for tyranny! Mothers, wives, mistresses, or sisters, they always will govern us. As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it.—“I will do this,” and “you shall do that,” and “you shall do t'other, or else the fammaly sha'n't have a farden of it.” (*Mimicking.*) So absolute with her money! But to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute, and so we must e'en make the best of her. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—The Garden.

Enter LORD OGLEBY and CANTON.

Lord O. What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away? Why? Wherefore? What's the meaning of all this?

Can. Je ne sçais pas; I know nothing of it.

Lord O. It can't be: it sha'n't be:—I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and I had much rather that the rest of the family were annihilated, than that she should leave us. Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of Change-alley; the aunt, that's always endeavouring to be a fine lady; and the pert sister, for ever shewing that she is one, are horrid company indeed, and without her would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing: isn't she, Canton?

Can. Dere is very good sympatie entre vous and dat younglady, my lor.

Lord O. I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals; your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs, and Devilbergs: if she goes, I'll positively go too.

Can. In de same post-chay, my lor? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neither too—Ha, ha, ha!

Lord O. Pr'ythee hold thy foolish tongue, Canton. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires? My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects. I fly as naturally to a fine girl—

Can. As de fine girl to you, mi lor, ha, ha, ha! you always fly togedre, like un pair de pigeons—

Lord O. Like un pair de pigeons. (*Mocks him.*) Vous êtes un sot, Monsieur Canton. Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never see'st me badiner, but you suspect mischief, you old fool, you.

Can. I am fool, I confess, but not always fool in dat, mi lor, he, he, he!

Lord O. He, he, he! Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee, here, (*takes out his box*) a most ridiculous superfluity; but a pinch of thee now and then is a most delicious treat.

Can. You do me great honneur, mi lor.

Lord O. 'Tis fact, upon my soul. Thou art pro

perly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes, and profound thinking—ha, ha, ha! [prode.]

Can. Your flatterie, mi lor, vil make me too

Lord O. The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure: but pr'ythee, *Can.* is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

Can. (*Looks with a glass.*) Ah—la voila! En verité, 'tis she, mi lor—'tis one of de pigeons—de pigeons d'amour.

Lord O. Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey.

Can. I am monkee. I am ole; but I have eye, I have ear, and a little understand, now and den.

Lord O. Taisez vous, bête. [love to you.]

Can. Elle vous attend, my lor.—She vil make a

Lord O. Will she? Have at her then! A fine girl can't oblige me more. 'Egad, I find myself a little enjoué. Come along, *Can.*; she is but in the next walk; but there is such a deal of this d—d crinkum-crankum, as *Sterling* calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them. Allons! Monsieur Canton, allons! done.

[*Exeunt singing in French.*]

SCENE III.—Another part of the Garden.

Enter LOVEWELL and FANNY.

Love. My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress; it overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery. [parture?]

Fan. But how can it be effected before my de-

Love. I'll tell you.—*Lord Ogleby* seems to entertain a visible partiality for you; and, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behaviour, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. He is vain to an excess; but withal extremely good-natured, and would do anything to recommend himself to a lady. Do you open the whole affair of our marriage to him immediately. It will come with more irresistible persuasion from you than from myself; and I doubt not but you'll gain his friendship and protection at once. His influence and authority will put an end to *Sir John's* solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

Fan. Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

Love. I have heard him and *Canton*, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut-tree, by the parlour-door. If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately. To-morrow morning is fixed for your departure, and if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another. He approaches: I must retire. Speak, my dear Fanny, speak, and make us happy! [Exit.]

Fan. What shall I do? What shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

Enter LORD OGLEBY and CANTON.

Lord O. To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind; and it is fortunate that one man has broken in upon your reverie for the credit of our sex. I say one, madam; for poor *Canton* here, from age and infirmities, stands

Can. Noting at all, indeed. [for nothing.]

Fan. Your lordship does me great honour. I have a favour to request, my lord.

Lord O. A favour, madam? To be honoured with your commands is an inexpressible favour done to me, madam.

Fan. If your lordship could indulge me with the honour of a moment's—What's the matter with me? (*Aside.*)

Lord O. The girl's confused—Hey!—here's something in the wind, faith. I'll have a tête-à-tête with her. (*Aside.*) Allez vous en. (*To Canton.*)

Can. I go.—Ah, pauvre mademoiselle! Mi lor, have pitié upon the poor pigeone. (*Apart to Lord O.*)

Lord O. I'll knock you down, *Can.* (*Smiles.*)

Can. Den I go. (*Shuffles along.*) You are mosh please, for all dat. (*Aside.*) [Exit.]

Fan. I shall sink with apprehension. (*Aside.*)

Lord O. What a sweet girl!—she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family. (*Aside.*)

Fan. My lord, I— (*Curtseys and blushes.*)

Lord O. I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have, at this moment, the honour of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming with my tongue, what my eyes, perhaps, have but too weakly expressed—that I am literally the humblest of your servants.

Fan. I think myself greatly honoured by your lordship's partiality to me; but it distresses me that I am obliged, in my present situation, to apply to it for protection.

Lord O. I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to shew my zeal. Beauty, to me, is a religion, in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr. I'm in tolerable spirits, faith! (*Aside.*)

Fan. There is not, perhaps, at this moment, a more distressed creature than myself. Affection, duty, hope, despair, and a thousand different sentiments, are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

Lord O. Does it, madam? Venus forbid!—My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women. (*Aside, and smiling.*) Take courage, madam! dear Miss Fanny, explain. You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you. My heart, madam—I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy—by my honour, I am.

Fan. Then I will venture to unburthen my mind—*Sir John Melvil*, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

Lord O. How, madam? Has *Sir John* made his addresses to you?

Fan. He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say that my duty to my father, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship,—(*Curtseys.*)—made me shudder at his addresses. [Fanny, proceed.]

Lord O. Charming girl! Proceed, my dear Miss

Fan. In a moment—give me leave, my lord:—But if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure—

Lord O. Impossible! by all the tender powers! Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

Fan. Then, my lord, *Sir John's* addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time—as—as—(*hesitates.*)

Lord O. As what, madam?

Fan. As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another.

Lord O. If this is not plain, the devil's in it!—(*aside.*) But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know; tell me the how, the when, and the where. Tell me—

Re-enter CANTON, hastily.

Can. Mi lor, mi lor, mi lor!

Lord O. D—n your Swiss impertinence! how durst you interrupt me in the most critical, melting moment that ever love and beauty honoured me with?

Can. I demand pardonne, mi lor; *Sir John Melvil*, mi lor, sent me to beg you do him de honneur to speak a little to you, mi lor.

Lord O. I'm not at leisure; I am busy. Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll—

Can. Fort bien, mi lor. (*Goes out on tiptoe.*)

Lord O. By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death; but as no punishment ought to disturb the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

Fan. The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it; and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burthen. (*Aside.*)

Lord O. What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation: (*Aside.*) I presume, madam, (and as you have flattered me, by making me a party concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption) that—

Fan. Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me interest your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depend—

Lord O. Upon me, madam?

Fan. Upon you, my lord. (*Signs.*)

Lord O. There's no standing this: I have caught the infection; her tenderness dissolves me. (*Sighs.*)

Fan. And should you too severely judge of a rash action which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed—

Lord O. (*Takes her hand.*) Thou amiable creature! command my heart, for it is vanquished. Speak but thy virtuous wishes, and enjoy them.

Fan. I cannot, my lord; indeed, I cannot. Mr. Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me. [*Exit in tears.*]

Lord O. How the devil could I bring her to this? It is too much—too much; I can't bear it: I must give way to this amiable weakness. (*Wipes his eyes.*) My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. (*Stifles a tear.*) Can I be a man and withstand it? No; I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite à propos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby-house to-morrow morning. But what the devil! Miss Sterling too!—What mischief's in the wind now? no conquest there: no, no, that would be too much desolation in the family.

Enter STERLING and MISS STERLING.

Ster. My lord, your servant: I am attending my daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair. Speak to his lordship, Betsy.

Lord O. Your eyes, Miss Sterling, for I always read the eyes of a young lady, betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

Miss S. I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord.

Lord O. I cannot commend my kinsman's behaviour, madam. He has behaved like a false knight, I must confess. I have heard of his apostacy.—Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

Miss S. Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of Sir John's inconstancy.

Lord O. Nay now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny; but believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me, Miss Fanny has no passion for Sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed. (*Conceitedly.*)

Miss S. Not upon Mr. Lovewell, my lord.

Lord O. Lovewell! no, poor lad! she does not think of him. (*Smiles.*) I know better: however, a little time will solve all mysteries.

Miss S. Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of Sir John's artifice, and my sister's dissimulation. You don't know her; indeed, my lord, you don't know her; a base, insinuating, perfidious—It is too much! She has been before-hand with me, I perceive, endeavouring to prejudice your lordship in her favour; and I am to be laughed at by everybody. Such unnatural behaviour to me! But since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that, some way or other, I will have revenge. [*Exit.*]

Ster. This is foolish work, my lord.

Lord O. I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty. [*moving for a father.*]

Ster. It is touching indeed, my lord; and very

Lord O. To be sure, sir: you, with your exquisite feelings, must be distressed beyond measure. Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject, and proceed to

Ster. With all my heart, my lord. [*business.*]

Lord O. You see, Mr. Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

Ster. And I am very sorry to see it, my lord.

Lord O. Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr. Sterling?

Ster. 'Tis my only wish, at present, my omnium, as I may call it.

Lord O. Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

Ster. Shall they, my lord? but how—how?

Lord O. I'll marry in your family.

Ster. What! my sister Heidelberg?

Lord O. You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr. Sterling. No; not your sister, but your daughter.

Ster. My daughter!

Lord O. Fanny: now the murder's out.

Ster. What! you, my lord?

Lord O. Yes; I, I, Mr. Sterling.

Ster. No, no, my lord; that's too much. (*Smiles.*)

Lord O. Too much! I don't comprehend you.

Ster. What you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me! what will the folks say?

Lord O. Why, what will they say?

Ster. That you are a bold man, my lord; that's all.

Lord O. Mr. Sterling, this may be city wit, for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

Ster. To be sure, my lord.

Lord O. Then I'll explain. My nephew won't marry your eldest daughter, nor I neither. Your youngest daughter won't marry him: I will marry your youngest daughter. [*tune, my lord?*]

Ster. What! with a youngest daughter's for-

Lord O. With any fortune, or no fortune at all sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the demon, interest, sinks before him. So, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me.

Ster. Who told you so, my lord?

Lord O. Her own sweet self, sir.

Ster. Indeed!

Lord O. Yes, sir; our affection is mutual—your advantage double and treble: your daughter will be a countess directly, I shall be the happiest of beings, and you'll be father to an earl instead of a baronet. [*daughter?*]

Ster. But what will my sister say? and my

Lord O. I'll manage that matter; nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

Ster. Well said, my lord! your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution; but if you'll venture, I have no objection, if my sister has none.

Lord O. I'll answer for your sister, sir. Apropos—the lawyers are in the house: I'll have articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

Ster. Very well; and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want: you must excuse me, my lord, but I can't help laughing at the match.—He, he, he! what will the folks say? [*Exit.*]

Lord O. What a fellow am I going to make a father of! He has no more feeling than the post in his warehouse. But Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family. *Re-enter LOVEWELL, hastily.*

Love. I beg your lordship's pardon; are you alone, my lord?

Lord O. No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company—the best company.

Love. My lord!

Lord O. I never was in such exquisite, enchanting company, since my heart first conceived, or my senses tasted pleasure.

Love. What are they, my lord! (*Looks about.*)

Lord O. 'In my mind's eye, Horatio.'

Love. What company have you there, my lord?

Lord O. My own ideas, sir, which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstasy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each in perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity. [joice at it.]

Love. I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

Lord O. You shall rejoice at it, sir: my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

Love. Shall I, my lord? then I understand you;—you have heard;—Miss Fanny has informed you—

Lord O. She has; I have heard, and she shall be happy: 'tis determined.

Love. Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

Lord O. O yes: poor creature, how could she help it? 'Twas unavoidable—fate and necessity.

Love. It was indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me.

Lord O. And so it did the poor girl, faith!

Love. She trembled to disclose the secret, and declare her affections? [affections ill placed.]

Lord O. The world, I believe, will not think her

Love. (Bows.) You are too good, my lord.—And do you really excuse the rashness of the action?

Lord O. From my very soul, Lovewell.

Love. (Bows.) I was afraid of her meeting with a

Lord O. More fool you then— [cold reception.]

*Who pleads her cause with never failing beauty,
Here finds a full redress. (Strikes his breast.)*

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

Love. Her beauty, my lord, is the least merit. She has an understanding—

Lord O. Her choice convinces me of that.

Love. (Bows.) That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

Lord O. No, no, not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

Love. Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart, and generosity of mind, as well as you are with the inferior beauties of her face and person—

Lord O. I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind, touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that, were it not for the cold, unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

Love. My lord!

Lord O. I would, by all that's honourable in man, and amiable in woman!

Love. Marry her! Who do you mean, my lord?

Lord O. Miss Fanny Sterling, that is; the Countess of Ogleby, that shall be.

Love. I am astonished!

Lord O. Why, could you expect less from me?

Love. I did not expect this, my lord. [feeling.]

Lord O. Trade and accounts have destroyed your

Love. No, indeed, my lord, (Sighs.)

Lord O. The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures. I never do any thing by halves, do I, Lovewell?

Love. No indeed, my lord. (Sighs.) What an accident! (Aside.)

Lord O. What's the matter, Lovewell? thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties. Why don't you wish me joy, man?

Love. O, I do, my lord. (Sighs.)

Lord O. She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

Love. But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution?

Lord O. No, sir, I am above consideration, when my desires are kindled.

Love. But consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, Sir John.

Lord O. Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr. Lovewell.

Love. Mr. Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to Sir John.

Lord O. Sir John has already refused Mr. Sterling's daughter. [my lord?]

Love. But what will become of Miss Sterling,

Lord O. What's that to you? You may have her, if you will. I depend upon Mr. Sterling's city philosophy to be reconciled to Lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law, instead of Sir John Melvil, baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought to that, without having recourse to his calculations, eh, Lovewell?

Love. But my lord, that is not the question.

Lord O. Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer. I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

What news with you, Sir John? You look all hurry and impatience, like a messenger after a battle.

Sir J. After a battle indeed, my lord. I have this day had a severe engagement; and, wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered up resolution to declare, what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

Lord O. To the business then, and be as concise as possible, for I am upon the wing; eh, Lovewell? (Smiles, and Lovewell bows.)

Sir J. I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

Lord O. Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion—sha'n't I, Lovewell? (Smiles, and Lovewell bows.)

Sir J. Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

Lord O. I am not at all surprised at it; she's a bitter potion, that's the truth of it; but, as you were to swallow it and not I, it was your business, not mine.—Anything more?

Sir J. But this, my lord; that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

Lord O. O yes, by all means; have you any hopes there, nephew? Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell? (Smiles, and winks at Lovewell.)

Love. I think not, my lord. (Gravely.)

Lord O. I think so too; but let the fool try.

Sir J. Will your lordship favour me with your good offices to remove the chief obstacle to the match, the repugnance of Mrs. Heidelberg?

Lord O. Mrs. Heidelberg? Had not you better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble, won't it, Lovewell? (Smiles.) But do what you please, it will be the same thing to me—won't it, Lovewell? (Conceitedly.) Why don't you laugh at him?

Love. I do, my lord. (Forces a smile.)

Sir J. And your lordship will endeavour to prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

Lord O. I'll speak to Mrs. Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

Sir J. Your generosity transports me.

Lord O. Poor fellow, what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town? (Aside.)

Sir J. And your lordship is not in the least offended at this seeming inconstancy?

Lord O. Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*, lawful game, and every man who is qualified, has a natural right to pursue them—Lovewell as well as you, and you as well as he, and I as well as either of you. Every man shall do his best, without offence to any—what say you, kinsmen?

Sir J. You have made me happy, my lord.

Love. And me, I assure you, my lord.

Lord O. And I am superlatively so—allons donc! To horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine—suivons l'amour. (Sings.) [Exeunt.]

ACT V.—SCENE I.—*Fanny's Apartment.*

Enter LOVEWELL and FANNY, followed by BETTY.

Fan. Why did you come so soon, Mr. Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber-door.

Bet. My mistress is right, sir; evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good, not to expect mischief from them.

Love. But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

Bet. I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

Fan. I do expect the worst. Pr'ythee, Betty, return to the outward door, and listen if you hear anybody in the gallery, and let us know directly.

Bet. I warrant you, madam; the lord bless you both. *[Exit.*

Fan. What did my father want with you this evening?

Love. He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to Lord Ogleby.

Fan. And why did you not obey him?

Love. Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account. But, as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

Fan. Hark!—hark! bless me, how I tremble! I feel the terrors of guilt. Indeed, Mr. Lovewell, this is too much for me; this situation may have very unhappy consequences. *(Weeps.)*

Love. But it sha'n't. I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risk of maintaining you by the hardest labour, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity. What! shall I sacrifice all my best hopes and affections, in your dear health and safety, for the mean (and in such case the meanest) consideration, of our fortune? Were we to be abandoned by all our relations, we have that in our hearts and minds will weigh against the most affluent circumstances. I should not have proposed the secrecy of our marriage, but for your sake; and with hopes that the most generous sacrifice, you have made to love and me, might be less injurious to you, by waiting a lucky moment of reconciliation.

Fan. Hush, hush! for heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm! your generosity gets the better of your prudence: you will be heard, and we shall be discovered. I am satisfied, indeed I am. Excuse this weakness, this delicacy, this what you will. My mind's at peace, indeed it is; think no more of it, if you love me.

Love. That one word has charmed me, as it always does, to the most implicit obedience: it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you a moment. *(Kisses her.)*

Re-enter BETTY.

Bet. *(In a low voice.)* I'm sorry to disturb you.

Fan. Ha! what's the matter?

Love. Have you heard anybody?

Bet. Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you too, or I'm mistaken; if they had seen you too, we should have been in a fine quandary.

Fan. Pr'ythee don't prate now, Betty.

Love. What did you hear?

Bet. I was preparing myself, as usual, to take

Love. A nap! *[me a little nap—*

Bet. Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head, for fear of the earache from the key-hole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of buzzing, which I first took for a gnat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so

Fan. Well, well; and so— *[with my hand.*

Bet. And so, madam, when I heard Mr. Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder too; and, pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise.—*(Makes an indistinct noise, like speaking.)*

Fan. Well, and what did they say? *[was said.*

Bet. Oh! I could not understand a word of what

Love. The outward door is locked?

Bet. Yes; and I bolted it too, for fear of the worst. *[if they were near.*

Fan. Why did you? they must have heard you,

Bet. And I did it on purpose, madam, and coughed a little too, that they might not hear Mr. Lovewell's voice: when I was silent, they were silent, and so I came to tell you.

Fan. What shall we do?

Love. Fear nothing; we know the worst; it will only bring on our catastrophe a little too soon.—But Betty might fancy this noise; she's in the conspiracy, and can make a man a mouse at any time.

Bet. I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters: I am sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

Fan. He compliments you—don't be a fool.—Now you have set her tongue a-running, she'll mutter for an hour. *(To Lovewell.)* I'll go and hearken myself. *[Exit.*

Bet. I'll turn my back upon no girl for sincerity and service. *(Half aside, muttering.)*

Love. Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, for one and the other.

Bet. I am not mercenary neither: I can live on a little, with a good carreter.

Re-enter FANNY.

Fan. All seems quiet. Suppose, my dear, you go to your own room; I shall be much easier then, and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

Bet. You may discover, if you please; but for my part, I shall still be secret. *(Half aside.)*

Love. Should I leave you now, if they still are on the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult upon to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the outward door after her; we can fasten this; and, when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

Bet. Shall I, madam?

Fan. Do let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after.

Love. I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll be gone this moment. *(Going.)* *[her—*

Fan. Betty shall go first, and if they lay hold of

Bet. They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. *(Going hastily.)*

Fan. Softly, softly, Betty; don't venture out, if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you. See, Mr. Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

Love. But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

[Exeunt, softly.

SCENE II.—*A gallery, which leads to several bed-chambers. The stage dark.*

Enter MISS STERLING, leading MRS. HEIDELBERG, in a night-cap.

Miss S. This way, dear madam, and then I'll tell you all.

Mrs. H. Nay but, niece, consider a little—don't drag me out this figure; let me put on my fly-cap. If any of my lord's family, or the counsellors at law should be stirring, I should be prodigiously disconcerted.

Miss S. But, my dear madam, a moment is an age, in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber!—O! she's all craft and wickedness.

Mrs. H. Well, but softly, Betsy; you are all in emotion; your mind is too much flustered; you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take your natural rest. Compose yourself, child; for, if we are not as warisome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole family.

Miss S. We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself; or if any body, it is my sister: my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change broker: so that if you, madam, don't continue my friend—if you forsake me

—if I am to lose my best hopes and consolation—in your tenderness—and affections—I had better—at once—give up the matter—and let my sister enjoy—the fruits of her treachery—trample with scorn upon the rights of her elder sister—the will of the best of aunts—and the weakness of a too interested father. (*She pretends to be bursting into tears during this speech.*)

Mrs. H. Don't, Betsy—keep up your spirit: I hate whimpering—I am your friend; depend upon me in every particular. But be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered.

Miss S. I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiavel sister would not rest till she had broke my heart: I was so uneasy that I could not stay in my room, but when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward; she immediately came back and told me, that they were in high consultation; that she heard only, for it was in the dark, my sister's maid conducting Sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

Mrs. H. And how did you conduct yourself in this dilemma?

Miss S. I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said distinctly; and you may depend upon it, that Sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before the morning, if we don't prevent them.

Mrs. H. Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband, (that is to be,) lock'd up in her chamber! at night too! I tremble at the thoughts!

Miss S. Hush, madam! I hear something.

Mrs. H. You frighten me:—let me put on my fly-cap—I would not be seen in this figur for the world.

Miss S. 'Tis dark, madam; you can't be seen.

Mrs. H. I protest, there's a candle coming, and a man too!

Miss S. Nothing but servants; let us retire a moment. (*They retire.*)

Enter BRUSH, half drunk, laying hold of the Chambermaid, who has a candle in her hand.

Cham. Be quiet, Mr. Brush; I shall drop down with terror.

Brush. But my sweet, and most amiable chambermaid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason; that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

Cham. But you may do me harm, Mr. Brush, and a great deal of harm too; pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you! I tremble like an asp.

Brush. But they sha'n't hear us; and if you have a mind to be ruined, it shall be the making of your fortune, you little slut, you! therefore, I say it again, if you have no love, hear a little reason!

Cham. I wonder at your impudence, Mr. Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a town-rake, I see, and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

Brush. Nothing, by heavens! but your frowns, most amiable chambermaid; I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink port, and your master's is so heady, that a pint of it oversets a claret-drinker. Come, now, my dear little spider-brusher!

Cham. Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me? [able!]

Brush. I'll take care of you, by all that's honour—

Cham. You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's.

Brush. We know all that. And that Lord Ogleby's and that my Lady What-d'ye-call-em's: I don't mind such folks when I'm sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that, too.

Cham. More shame for you, Mr. Brush! you terrify me; you have no modesty.

Brush. O, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher: for instance, I reverence Miss Fanny; she's a most delicious morsel, and fit for a prince. With all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself:—but for her sister— [story!]

Miss S. (*Within.*) There, there, madam, all in a Cham. Bless me, Mr. Brush!—I heard something.

Brush. Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon; if it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two d—'d things at once.

Cham. La! la! how you blaspheme! we shall have the house upon our heads for it.

Brush. No, no, it will last our time;—but as I was saying, the eldest sister, Miss Jezebel—

Cham. Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

Brush. No; we have smoked her already; and, unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us.—No, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

Cham. You're a monstrous rake, Mr. Brush, and don't care what you say.

Brush. Why, for that matter, my dear, I am a little inclined to mischief; and if you don't have pity upon me, I will break open that door, and ravish Mrs. Heidelberg.

Mrs. H. (*Coming forward.*) There's no bearing this—you profligate monster!

Cham. Ha! I am undone!

Brush. Zounds! here she is, by all that's monstrous. (*Runs off.*) [fellow.]

Miss S. A fine discourse you have had with that

Mrs. H. And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

Miss S. What have you to say for yourself?

Cham. I can say nothing—I'm so frightened, and so ashamed.—But, indeed, I am virtuous—I am virtuous, indeed.

Mrs. H. Well, well—don't tremble so; but tell us what you know of this horrible plot here.

Miss S. We'll forgive you if you'll discover all.

Cham. Why, Madam, don't let me betray my fellow-servants; I sha'n't sleep in my bed, if I do.

Mrs. H. Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

Cham. O dear! what shall I do?

Mrs. H. Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

Cham. Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry; Mr. Brush forced us to make a kind of holiday night of it.

Miss S. Holiday! for what?

Cham. Nay, I only made one.

Miss S. Well, well! but upon what account?

Cham. Because as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said—that his honour, Sir John, was to marry Miss Fanny instead of your ladyship. [Very fine!]

Miss S. And so you make a holiday for that.—

Cham. I did not make it, ma'am.

Mrs. H. But do you know nothing of Sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

Cham. No, indeed, ma'am.

Miss S. Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

Cham. No, as I hope for marcy, ma'am.

Mrs. H. Well, I'll put an end to all this directly; do you run to my brother Sterling—

Cham. Now, ma'am? 'Tis so very late, ma'am—

Mrs. H. I don't care how late it is. Tell him there are thieves in the house—that the house is on fire—tell him to come here immediately. Go, I say.

Cham. I will; I will, though I'm frighten'd out of my wits. [Exit.]

Mrs. H. Do you watch here, my dear; and I'll put myself in order to face them. We'll plot 'em, and counterplot 'em too. [Exit.]

Miss S. I have as much pleasure in this revenge, as in being made a countess. Ha! they are unlocking the door. Now for it! (*Retires.*)

Fanny's door is unlocked, and BETTY comes out,
Miss Sterling approaches.

Bet. (Calling within.) Sir! sir! now's your
time—all's clear. (Seeing Miss Sterling.)—Stay,
stay—not yet—we are watch'd.

Miss S. And so you are, Madam Betty. (Miss
Sterling lays hold of her, while Betty locks the door,
and puts the key into her pocket.)

Bet. (Turning round.) What's the matter, madam?

Miss S. Nay, that you shall tell my father and
aunt, madam.

Bet. I am no tell-tale, madam, and no thief;
they'll get nothing from me. (Aside.)

Miss S. You have a great deal of courage, Betty,
and, considering the secrets you have to keep, you
have occasion for it.

Bet. My mistress shall never repent her good
opinion of me, ma'am.

Enter STERLING.

Ster. What's all this? What's the matter? Why
am I disturb'd in this manner?

Miss S. This creature, and my distresses, sir,
will explain this matter.

Re-enter MRS. HEIDELBERG, with another head-dress.

Mrs. H. Now I'm prepared for the encounter.—
Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of
wickedness?

Ster. Not I—but what is it? speak. I was got
into my little closet, all the lawyers were in bed,
and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of
Lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed
with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and
whether it's fire, or thieves, or murder, or a rape,
I'm quite in the dark.

Mrs. H. No, no; there's no rape, brother. All
parties are willing, I believe.

Miss S. Who's in that chamber? (Detaining
Betty, who seemed to be stealing away.)

Bet. My mistress.

Miss S. And who's with your mistress?

Bet. Why, who should there be?

Miss S. Open the door, then, and let us see.

Bet. The door is open, madam. (Miss Ster. goes
to the door.) I'll sooner die than peach. [Exit hastily.]

Miss S. The door is locked; and she has got the
key in her pocket.

Mrs. H. There's impudence, brother! piping hot
from your daughter Fanny's school!

Ster. But, zounds! what is all this about? You
tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the
particulars.

Mrs. H. Sir John Melvil is locked up in your
daughter's bed-chamber—There is the particular.

Ster. The devil he is!—That's bad.

Miss S. And he has been there some time, too.

Ster. Ditto!

Mrs. H. Ditto! worse and worse, I say. I'll
raise the whole house, and expose him to my lord,
and the whole fammaly.

Ster. By no means! we shall expose ourselves,
sister. The best way is to insure privately:—let me
alone! I'll make him marry her to-morrow morning.

Miss S. Make him marry her! this is beyond all
patience!—You have thrown away all your affec-
tion, and I shall do as much by my obedience;
unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My
revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it.
Had they made their escape, I should have been
exposed to the derision of the world: but the de-
riders shall be derided; and so—Help, help, there!
—Thieves! thieves! [girl.]

Mrs. H. Tit-for-tat, Betsy! you are right, my

Ster. Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the
whole family—the devil's in the girl.

Mrs. H. No, no; the devil's in you, brother: I
am ashamed of your principles. What! would you
connive at your daughter's being locked up with
her sister's husband? Help! Thieves! thieves! I say.

Ster. Sister, I beg of you! daughter, I command

you!—If you have no regard for me, consider your-
selves! We shall lose this opportunity of ennobling
our blood, and getting above twenty per cent. for
our money.

Miss S. What, by my disgrace and my sister's
triumph? I have a spirit above such mean consi-
derations: and to shew you that it is not a low-
bred, vulgar, 'Change-alley spirit.—Help! help!
Thieves! thieves! thieves! I say.

Ster. Ay, ay, you may save your lungs; the
house is in an uproar.

Enter CANTON, in a night-gown and slippers.

Can. Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great
noise, dis tintamarre?

Ster. Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

Lord O. (Calls within.) Brush!—Brush!—
Canton!—Where are you?—What's the matter?—
(Rings a bell.) Where are you?

Ster. 'Tis my lord calls, Mr. Canton.

Can. I com, mi lor! (Lord O. still rings.) [Exit.]

Flow. (Calls within.) A light! a light here!—
Where are the servants? Bring a light for me and
my brothers.

Ster. Lights here! lights for the gentlemen! [Exit.]

Mrs. H. My brother feels, I see:—your sister's
turn will come next.

Miss S. Ay, ay, let it go round, madam, it is the
only comfort I have left.

Re-enter STERLING with lights, before SERGEANT
FLOWER, with a boot and a slipper, and TRAVERSE.

Ster. This way, sir; this way, gentlemen.

Flow. Well, but Mr. Sterling, no danger, I
hope? Have they made a burglarious entry? Are
you prepared to repulse them? I am very much
alarmed about thieves at circuit time. They would
be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

Trav. No danger, Mr. Sterling;—no trespass, I
hope? [making.]

Ster. None, gentlemen, but of those ladies'

Mrs. H. You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen,
that all your labours and studies about this young
lady, are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is at this
moment locked up with this lady's younger sister.

Flow. The thing is a little extraordinary, to be
sure; but, why were we to be frightened out of
our beds for this? Could not we have tried this
cause to-morrow morning?

Miss S. But, sir, by to-morrow morning, per-
haps, even your assistance would not have been of
any service:—the birds now in that cage would
have flown away.

Enter LORD OGLEBY, in his robe-de-chambre,
night-cap, &c. leaning on CANTON.

Lord O. I had rather lose a limb than my night's
rest. What's the matter with you all?

Ster. Ay, ay, 'tis all over!—Here's my lord, too.

Lord O. What's all this shrieking and screaming?
Where's my angelic Fanny? She's safe, I hope.

Mrs. H. Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is locked
up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

Lord O. My nephew! Then I will be excom-
municated.

Mrs. H. Your nephew, my lord, has been plot-
ting to run away with Miss Fanny, and Miss Fanny
has been plotting to run away with your nephew:
and if we had not watched them, and called up the
fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scot-
land by this time.

Lord O. Look ye, ladies! I know that Sir John
has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny;
and I know too, that Miss Fanny has conceived a
violent passion for another person; and I am so
well convinced of the rectitude of her affections,
that I will support them with my fortune, my
honour, and my life.—Eh, sha'n't I, Mr. Sterling?
(Smiling.) What say you?

Ster. (Sulkily.) To be sure, my lord. These bawl-
ing women have been the ruin of everything. (Aside.)

Lord O. But, come, I'll end this business in a

trice.—If you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and Mr. Sterling will ensure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the key-hole.

Mrs. H. The horrid creatures!—I say, my lord, break the door open.

Lord O. Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate! Now to our experiment! (*Advancing towards the door.*)

Miss S. Now, what will they do? My heart will beat through my bosom.

Re-enter BETTY with the key.

Bet. There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord; we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies. (*Going to unlock the door.*)

Mrs. H. There's impudence!

Lord O. The mystery thickens. Lady of the bedchamber, (*To Betty.*) open the door, and entreat Sir John Melvil (for the ladies will have it that he is there) to appear, and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors. Call Sir John Melvil into court!

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Sir J. I am here, my lord.

Mrs. H. Hey-day!

Sir J. What's all this alarm and confusion? There is nothing but hurry in this house? What is the reason of it?

Lord O. Because you have been in that chamber;—have been! nay, you are there at this moment, as these ladies have protested, so don't deny it—

Trav. This is the clearest alibi I ever knew,

Flow. Luce clarius. [Mr. Sergeant.

Lord O. Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolics, it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you. But, come, (*To Betty.*) open the door and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth, and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

Bet. (*Opening the door.*) Madam, you are wanted in this room. (*Pertly.*)

Enter FANNY, in great confusion.

Miss S. You see she's ready dressed—and what confusion she's in. [Her guilt confounds her!

Mrs. H. Ready to pack off, bag and baggage!

Flow. Silence in the court, ladies.

Fan. I am confounded, indeed, madam.

Lord O. Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but with your own peculiar modesty declare your state of mind. Pour conviction into their ears, and rapture into mine. (*Smiling.*)

Fan. I am, at this moment, the most unhappy—most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the power to reveal a secret, which, to conceal, has been the misfortune and misery of my— (*Faints away.*)

LOVEWELL rushes out of the chamber.

Love. My Fanny in danger! I can contain no longer. Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this. Speak, speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny! let me but hear thy voice: open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of

Miss S. Lovewell!—I am easy. [life.

Mrs. H. I am thunderstruck!

Lord O. I am petrified!

Sir J. And I undone.

Fan. (*Recovering.*) O, Lovewell! even supported by thee, I dare not look my father nor his lordship in the face. [sir?

Ster. What now? Did not I send you to London,

Lord O. Eh! What? How's this? By what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bedchamber?

Love. By that right which makes me the happiest of men; and by a title which I would not forego for any the best of kings could give.

Bet. I could cry my eyes out to hear his mag-

Lord O. I am annihilated! [unanimity.

Ster. I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak.—Lovewell, you are a villain;—you have broken your word with me.

Fan. Indeed, sir, he has not: you forbade him to think of me, when it was out of his power to obey you—we have been married these four months.

Ster. And he sha'n't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery! As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam!

Fan. Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable for ever without your forgiveness.

Ster. Lovewell, you shall leave my house directly; and you shall follow him, madam!

Lord O. And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Lookye, Mr. Sterling, there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them, is to forgive the cause of them, which I do from my soul. Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune; it is a debt of honour, and must be paid. You swore as much too, Mr. Sterling; but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without—errors excepted.

Ster. I am a father, my lord; but for the sake of other fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls, like herself, to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

Love. I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies, with minds like my Fanny's, would startle at the very shadow of vice; and when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

Mrs. H. Indiscretion, quotha! a mighty pretty delicate word to express disobedience!

Lord O. For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls! I pity them. And you must forgive them, too. Come, come, melt a little of your flint, Mr. Sterling.

Ster. Why, why as to that, my lord—to be sure, he is a relation of your's, my lord—What say you, sister Heidelberg?

Mrs. H. The girl's ruined, and I forgive her.

Ster. Well! so do I then. Nay, no thanks. (*To Love and Fan, who seem preparing to speak.*) There's an end of the matter. [*Exit Flow, Trav. and Betty.*

Lord O. But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

Love. Your kindness, my lord. I can scarcely believe my own senses—they are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation, and gratitude. I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship.—For you, Mr. Sterling, if every moment of my life, spent gratefully in your service, will, in some measure, compensate the want of fortune, you, perhaps, will not repent your goodness to me. And you, ladies, I flatter myself, will not, for the future, suspect me of artifice and intrigue—I shall be happy to oblige and serve you. As for you, Sir John—

Sir J. No apologies to me, Lovewell; I do not deserve any. All I have to offer in excuse for what has happened, is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, yourself, and that lady, (who I hope will pardon my behaviour) a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you, that light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honour enough to rejoice at your happiness.

Love. And now, my dearest Fauny, though we are, seemingly, the happiest of beings, yet all our joys would be damped, if his lordship's generosity and Mr. Sterling's forgiveness should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation, and consent of these our best benefactors. (*To the audience.*)

